

Community Meeting #3 Summary

Introduction

On Monday, July 18th, 2005, the third community meeting for the Integrated Area Planning (IAP) of the American River Parkway Plan Update was held at the Sacramento Public Library Galleria in downtown Sacramento, California. The Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA), City of Sacramento, County of Sacramento, Cal Exposition and State Fair and the Sacramento Water Forum held a 3-hour public meeting to review the IAP Concept Plan, including proposals for habitat restoration, flood control, access, circulation and parking, recreation, and wayfinding improvements. Approximately 50 community members attended the event.

Presentation Overview

Sunny Williams, Sacramento County Planning Department and Daniel Iacofano, Moore Iacofano Goltsman Inc. (MIG), presented an overview of the agenda and introduced the staff, UCAC members and facilitators. Daniel then presented a brief history of the IAP process, an overview of the Plan Framework, including the Parkway Vision and Goals, IAP Guiding Principles, Design Objectives and Criteria, the habitat succession concept, the circulation concept and the specific concepts for the three reaches in the IAP: Discovery Park, Woodlake, and Cal Expo.

After the overview presentation, the participants were divided into six groups to review six stations:

1. IAP Framework
2. Habitat Restoration
3. Circulation and Trails
4. Discovery Park
5. Woodlake
6. Cal Expo

All six groups visited each station for approximately 20 minutes each. At each site, representatives from SAFCA, City of Sacramento, County of Sacramento, Cal Expo, Center for Collaborative Planning (CCP), and MIG explained the content and answered any questions that participants had.

At the end of the breakout groups all the participants were brought together for a final summary and next steps discussion. Comments voiced during the breakout sessions, as well as participants' comment cards and idea cards are listed on the following pages according to their subject matter.

Note: Numbers contained within parentheses indicate the number of times the sentiment was voiced or written.

OVERARCHING COMMENTS

- Any new program element should have a very light footprint and resources to monitor and maintain the Parkway (especially re: mountain biking and off-leash dogs). Protect the visual quality of the natural habitat, natural trails. (3)
- Consistent disagreement about whether increasing legitimate uses will decrease vandalism and improve Parkway conditions or whether it will diminish the natural quality and uniqueness of the Parkway. (5)
- Articulate funding and maintenance strategies. Address how to fund/implement principles and objectives. Fiscal plan is necessary; principles are moot without funding. The plan's funding strategy is necessary to enforce consistent use and prevent high impact human use. What is going to change to make all of the good ideas realized? Funding, rangers are already inadequate. (4)
- Articulate adaptive management strategy that measures real impacts and addresses how human use and flooding patterns will be adapted for health of Parkway (using indicators, # of acres, etc.). Implement the Plan and observe impacts over a trial period and adjust as necessary. The Parkway can be restored quickly if a trail needs to be re-routed. (8)
- Consistent disagreement about how to address public safety. One argument is an increase in users will not occur until the Parkway is a safe. Stewardship and enforcement of Parkway is critical to the Plan's success. Hire more rangers to address illegal camping/squatting, trash, and feral cats. (9) The opposing argument is activate the Parkway; rather than get the "riff raff" out, bring more people in for legitimate use. One suggestion is to hire/pay the homeless to help clean the park (organized by the Salvation Army). (2)
- Provide strategies for multiple agencies of adjacent cities and the County to work together for efficiency. Develop a single body to take ownership of Parkway so issues can be addressed comprehensively.(3)
- Encourage detailed/focused planning efforts along other areas upstream within Parkway.

IAP FRAMEWORK COMMENTS

- Be sure that proposed uses are mindful of the Parkway's "river oriented recreational pursuits" vision statement.
- Add a sixth principle to the Trail Systems Guiding Principles: Limit trails to improve habitat corridors; ensure corridors are not broken up.
- Expand on Design Objective #4 to stress its importance.
- Remove "activation" from the Community Use and Recreation Criteria (bullet #2).
- Define "passive recreation" from the Community Use and Recreation Criteria (bullet #1); consider using another term that is more descriptive. One suggestion is "human powered on dirt recreation." (2)

HABITAT RESTORATION COMMENTS

General Habitat Comments

- How does the Plan accommodate natural flow of river? How does Plan accommodate flooding? (2)
- There is a greater need now to keep the Parkway natural with increased populations. Parkway is a world-class place, but population pressures are increasing. The Parkway becomes more and more valuable as the surrounding population grows. Don't establish a precedent of "invading" the Parkway with "things" such as faster bicycles, loose dogs, big buildings, more parking, more hardscape. Resist putting anything in the Parkway that introduces garbage and noise. Establish precedent to preserve Parkway's integrity. Maintain the Parkway's unique natural habitat. More activities will ruin the natural atmosphere. (5)
- The Parkway is not "natural"; it's over-run with invasive species which can only be helped with restoration and activation of trails to ensure illegal, harmful activities do not occur. Balance use and restoration and operation/maintenance of Parkway.
- Define habitat succession.
- Define mitigation vs. restoration.

- Describe how agriculture can support restoration.
- **Develop native nursery area in Parkway.**
- Manage habitat to enhance safety of users – line of sight. Reduce the height of tall, overgrown bushes (i.e. blackberry) to increase visibility and safety.
- Make sure an inundating flood occurs occasionally. (2)
- How can the Plan address adjacent golf course impacts on habitat?
- **Anticipate and plan for erosion, especially in areas close to the proposed horse trail.**
- Has there been any effort to “remove” use and return to a more naturalistic condition?
- Restore and maintain habitat corridors where possible. (3)
- Confirm that the RCMP’s recommendations are tested scientific methods. Question of science validity for habitat enhancements. (2)
- Involve college programs to help restoration activities.
- Wetlands for storm treatment and natural water flow are a great idea, especially in Woodlake and Cal Expo. (10)
- Great plan for Bushy Lake restoration. (4)
- Concern over storm treatment water going thru Bushy Lake, and causing contamination. Determine how to maintain water level. Determine if water quality from Steelhead Creek is compatible with swimming and/or fishing. Consider the mosquito problems associated with wetlands. (5)
- Be sure to include restoration on all newly excavated or modified areas.

Invasive Species Comments

- Develop standards and criteria for determining invasive species management priorities. Define invasive species. Address specific wildlife species (feral cats, beavers, etc); populations are unbalanced but not all existing species are sacred or native. Be aware of the specific endangered or native species in need of protection. Describe what species are associated with habitat types. Itemize species helped by restoration. (7)
- Remove invasive and non-native plants: Prioritize Star Thistle and Poison Oak as high priority species to control. (3)
- Demonstrate how restoration yields flood control benefits, including why invasives do not work as well. Ensure that proposals do not conflict with flood control; show how design responds to flooding. (3)

ACCESS, TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION AND PARKING COMMENTS

RT Connections

- Support for the DNA crossing over the Parkway a signature bridge/crossing. Travel up and over the existing habitat, so as not to negatively impact.
- **Opposition to the DNA alignment over the Parkway; consider another alignment that does not disturb habitat. (2)**
- **RT stations should be closer to the Parkway to improve access from Downtown/Midtown to transit. (3)**
- Reconsider RT station in Woodlake Gateway, but be mindful of safety/loitering impact on the habitat.
- DNA Light Rail line will not come for some years/decades.
- Concern about unsafe area around RT station at North 12th and 16th Street. Can station improvements make it better or is lack of safety too great to make any difference.

Roadway Intersection Improvements

- **Parkway is still considered walled-off from Midtown and Downtown; connections are needed along city streets (11).**

- Woodlake neighborhood does not have convenient or safe access to the Parkway.
- Current road/bikeway intersections (4-way stops) are dangerous and should be redesigned. (3)
- The lack of access from surrounding neighborhoods reduces Parkway safety. Improve access from neighborhoods to the south. (2)
- Repair 20th Street Bikeway.
- Minimize vehicle access additions and parking in the Parkway. Access should be human powered: walk, bike or paddle.
- Need to consider transportation circulation at Highway 160 and impacts to ARP. Highway 160 corridor is unsightly and detracts from environment, some aesthetic solution is needed. Concern regarding personal safety at Highway 160. Develop a map of Highway 160 Bridge for Two River Trail. (5)

Bridge Crossings and Infrastructure

- Make the electric towers/highway overpass look more like natural habitat.
- Remove the powerlines.
- Support for the Capital City Freeway crossing.
- Construct bicycle/pedestrian bridge over Del Paso Blvd.
- Follow Transportation Equity Act 20 federal guidelines.
- Support for the two westernmost bridges, but need to address multiple user designations as in the 1985 Plan.
- Label major over-crossings (bridges, etc).

Trail System

General Trail Comments

- Develop a realistic plan to ensure enforcement of trail use and recreation.
- Provide access into Parkway at points on levee, especially at 20th and 28th Streets. Consider access from what is now Lot A to levee. (3)
- Support trail on levee top on South Bank.
- Determine how to protect levees from misuse. One suggestion is to implement large monetary fines for bicyclists riding up and down levees. (3)
- Improve access to the Two Rivers Trail. (3)
- Opposition to realignment because of increase of trail use. Looped trails may not be the best solution if it increases trail coverage. Reduce the number of trails. (2)
- Support of realignment and looped trails. Good job creating larger habitat areas by eliminating old service roads. (4)
- Opposition to realignment because of reduction of trail use. Abandoning some trail areas might allow beavers to increase adverse environmental impacts. Do not eliminate trails without an environmentally compelling reason to do so. (2)
- Find another method of preventing vehicle use on trails; the poles on trails are unsafe.
- Develop requirement for trail width, etc. Look into trail standards already set by the city. Dimensions of trails are important for safety. Most dirt trails should be 12' to 18' tread width, not 6 to 10'. (4)
- Prioritize which trails will be renovated/realigned first for funding purposes.
- Concern regarding trails crossing at wetlands and along river's edge (20'-25'). (4)
- Add trail mile markers.
- SABA/SAMBA should be consulted on design of all bike intersections, trail usage, sight distance, signage, and construction to ensure safe, usable trails. (2)

- Have trails so we can walk in serenity without human contact habitat in some areas. Focus on getting people to the rivers edge while preserving a sense of serenity. (2)
- Investigate use of railroad ramp connector not shown on map at "Y". (2)
- Remove old trail segment near slough that floods west of railroad trestle.

Equestrian Trail

- Remove horses from the IAP area of the Parkway to reduce equine waste impact, trail damage, vegetation impacts, etc. They cause vegetation damage, introduce pollution, and truck and trailer parking absorbs valuable space. (6)
- The realignment of the equestrian trail in Woodlake is too exposed to sunlight and has too many crossings; a riverfront trail or the existing alignment is preferred. (6)
- Avoid wrapping equestrian trail around wetland area in Woodlake.
- Horses need access to water.
- Add equestrian parking at Discovery Park.
- Horses should have trail access to ride next to the Gardenland Pond. An equestrian staging area should be here and off of Northgate. Keep people out of Gardenland Pond as it will disturb wildlife. (2)
- Create equestrian access on both ends of Cal Expo. Connect trails to Equestrian parking areas.
- Need to abandon existing horse trail east of Highway 160; it could be used by pedestrians.
- Horses are forced to pay the \$8 entrance fee, while bicyclists and pedestrians are not. Compared to other entrance fees, this is high and constitutes discrimination against this group.
- Concern for potential conflicts where dogs and bikes are in close proximity to equestrian trails. Separate equestrian trail from multi-use and Jedediah Smith trails. (4)
- Support for keeping equestrians and other users in proximity of one another. Refer to other parks/areas that successfully operate and accommodate equestrian and other uses.

Jedediah Smith Trail

- Moving the Jedediah Smith trail for functionality will diminish the Parkway experience.
- "Multi-use trails" is a misnomer; the current width of Jedediah Smith trail doesn't allow enough space for walkers and dogs-on-leash.
- Improve gravel shoulder on Jedediah Smith Trail; current shoulder is not sufficient for primary pedestrian access. (2)
- Jedediah Smith trail crossing at Del Paso Boulevard (existing) is unsafe. Consider overhead crossing as a solution. (3)

Multi-Use Trails

- Support for biking on multi-use trails, as well as on dedicated mountain bike trails. Mountain bikes are the best way to "activate" dangerous areas, like Woodlake. (5)
- Opposition to multi-use trails. Move away from multi-use trails; stick to the three trails established in the 1985 Parkway Plan: Bike, Pedestrian (including those with on-leash dogs), and Equestrian. Too many trails may make people isolated/unsafe on trails, destroy habitat and will be harder to control/enforce regulations. (13)
- Opposition to mountain biking in the Parkway. (4)
- Define what "multi-use" term means. Need more education about trail use; multi-use trails can work. (3)
- "Multi-use" trails must allow all users, including equestrians. (3)
- Consider line of sight issues on multi-use trails; avoid blind corners.
- Support for narrow trails rather than over 10-foot wide dirt roads. (4)
- Support for mountain bikers on narrow trails, including those near the river. (2)

- Opposition to narrow, multi-use trails. How will county parks enforce a 5 mph speed limit on narrow multi-use trails? There's no such thing as safe, narrow multi-use trails. (2)
- Eliminate northernmost multi-use dirt trail.

PARK AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES COMMENTS

- Boat launches and parking areas are not necessary. Reduce the number of boat launches. (2)
- Move boat launch near Bushy Lake Trailhead to a better location.
- Beach is too far from Bushy Lake Trailhead.
- Disagreement regarding placement of a boat launch in the Gateway area.
- Amphitheater belongs on Sacramento River south of Tower Bridge, not in the American River Parkway.
- How big is amphitheater? What type of event capacity is possible? Integrate with water features of river.
- Attract more legitimate users and host events (bikeathon, Race for the Cure).
- Opposition to an off-leash dog area in the Parkway. (5)
- Support for off-leash dog area in the Parkway. The Parkway will lose active users without an off-leash recreation area. Opportunity for off-leash area on north side of Gardenland Pond. (6)
- Brainstorm more ideas for recreational uses in Discovery Park. (3)
- Support for recreational use and habitat restoration at Gardenland Pond.
- Opposition to recreational use at Gardenland Pond. Recreation/swimming uses might conflict with bird watching or less invasive uses on south side of lake. Should be protected for wildlife only; no beach areas. (4)
- Allow concessions in limited areas: especially in distinctly non-natural areas, such as under overpass. Develop a commercial beer garden/ice cream shop under Del Paso/160. Giving people a destination especially in the early evening will bring more people in making it feel safer. This area is very limited for commercial uses. (2)
- Implement surveillance cameras and parking in the Woodlake Gateway area.
- Support for Gold Rush Park to activate area South of Parkway.
- Include some agricultural aspects such as community gardens, orchards, or an organic agriculture educational center. (4)
- Relocate Cal Expo and use revenue to increase access.

INTERPRETATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM COMMENTS

- Utilize existing data and documentation from East Bay Parks and Recreation Department to establish appropriate rules, signage and materials for multi-use trails.
- Coordinate with Sacramento City to ensure good signage along adjacent streets.
- Refer to the 1985 Plan for guidance regarding interpretative centers.
- Refer to the California cultural and historical endowment and Proposition 40 Matching Grant Opportunity for permanent interpretative signage and kiosks.
- Develop better signage throughout the Parkway. Sign all overpasses for safety and navigation: Capital City Freeway, railroad track, 19th St. Bridge, Howe, Watt, Sunrise, Hazel. (4)
- Wayfinding should consist of maps instead of words.
- Support for the CIHC. Native Americans could creatively manage the Gardenland Pond area in coordination with a low-footprint interpretative center. CIHC would be asset due to philosophy about protection and preservation of nature. (6)
- Opposition to the CIHC. Indian center/interpretative center plans were not well understood or defined. CIHC is not appropriate for this area. (6)
- Restrict the number of visitors at CIHC if it gets built.

- Coordinate art projects/face lift contests to increase stewardship and improve Parkway conditions.
- Incorporate interpretative displays, maps and signs, such as those proposed for Bushy Lake.
- Include interpretative signage referencing Hawaiians who originally settled there.
- Develop an interpretative educational program to assist in restoration programs (for Woodlake areas).

PROCESS COMMENTS

- Articulate timeframe of specific proposals.
- IAP process seems on right track to bring connectivity to certain areas.
- Plan is well-written and thought-out. Excellent research and plans. (2)
- Good Job! Good presentations. (3)
- All habitat ideas look good!
- Critical subject of mountain biking not mentioned by facilitators and therefore escaped questioning until I raised it as the session closed. I'm strongly opposed, but my point is that it deserved some dialogue.
- Much less effort/planning went into Woodlake, which is part of the Parkway, compared to effort put into Gardenland Pond, which is not publicly owned.
- Enlarged area map should be outlined on big map.
- Presentation was smooth, but lacking in specifics and definitions. For example, what does "Parkway activation" really mean and encompass? The session had the feel of a lecture from a consultant, even though it was presented as the product of the Update Committee. Could have used some participation from committee members. I was left wondering who really crafted the Conceptual Plan.
- I am very pleased with the overall concepts in the plan. I like the involvement in this workshop. I enjoyed being a part of the meeting. (2)